

The Athenian Mercury :

Saturday, July 14. 1694.

Quest. 1. **I** Desire you wou'd give us a brief account of the Opinions of the Ebionites, Helcelsaits, Chiliasits, Corinthians, Nicholaites, Eucralites, and what was held by Novatus, Paulus Samosatenas, Simon Magus, Menander, Barsiles, and Montanus?

Ans. The Ebionites held Jesus to be born of Joseph and Mary, and but a Man; and that the Law was still to be observ'd after the Jewish Manner.

The Helcelsaits disallowed some of both the old and new Testament, and approved other parts of it; did not own St. Paul as an Apostle; thought it an indifferent thing if in Persecution they denied the Faith in words, if they but persisted faithful in their hearts; they received a certain Book, which, they say, came down from Heaven, and that who so heard and believed the Doctrines contained in it, shou'd gain another kind of Remission of Sins than what was purchased by Jesus Christ.

The Chiliasits, whose greatest Champion was one Ne-*pos*, taught, that the promises of the Almighty made unto holy Men, in the sacred Writ, were to be understood after the Jewish Manner; and held that after the Resurrection, they should lead a Life here on Earth in corporeal pleasures for 1000 years, which they maintained from the Revelations of St. John.

Corintians, who was the Founder of a Sect that bore his Name, pretended that 'twas revealed to him by Angels, that the Kingdom of Christ after the Resurrection shou'd become terrestial, that there shou'd be the term of a Millenary Feast allotted for Marriage: To which he added Holy Days, Oblations, and Slaughter for Sacrifices.

Nicholas, from whom the Nicholaites had their name, was a Deacon, who because he was accused of Jealousie, to clear himself brought forth his Wife, and permitted whosoever wou'd to marry her, yet lived chastly himself, admitting no Embraces but those of his own Wife, but his followers allowed of all fornication.

Novatus was the first of the Encratites, (or continent persons) he held that Marriage was to be abhorred, commanded abstinence from living Creatures, and denied that the first Man was saved; which Heretic afterwards one Severus revived, and from him they were called Severiani.

Novatus affirmed that there was no forgiveness to those that fall in persecution, and called his followers Puritans.

Paulus Samosatenas believed our Saviour to be but a meer Man, like unto us by Nature.

Simon Magus is said to have been the first Introducer of all Heresies into the Christian Church, his Picture was set up upon the Tiber with this inscription, *Simoni deo sancto.*

Menander was a Disciple of Simon Magus's, and called himself a Saviour sent down from above for the Salvation of Mankind; that none was able to subdue this world by his Magical Experience, and by the Baptism received of him. And that such as accepted these things, gained immortality in this life, and remained for ever without wrinkled old Age.

Agrippa Caster says Barsiles wrote twenty four Books upon the Gospel, feigning unto himself Prophets, whom he called Barcabus and Barcop, and others never before heard of; inventing the Barbarous Names to amaze the hearers. He taught that things offered to Idols might be eaten; that in time of Persecution the Faith with Perjury may be renounced, commanding silence as Pythagorus did for the space of five years.

Montanus was born in a Village, and whilst but a young Convert he grew proud, and pretended to Prophecy, being bereft of his Wits; he was much cry-

ed up and followed, persons belieiving him full of the Holy Ghost. At the same time also arose two Women named, *Priscilla* and *Maximilla*, possessed with evil Spirits, who spake foolish and fantastical things, much as he had done, confirming his Doctrine; *Maximilla* prophecy'd of Wars that should soon ensue, but the Event proved her a false Prophetess. *Montanus* taught breach of Wedlock, prescribed Laws of Fasting, ordained Toll-gatherers, and many the like things.

Quest. 2. What was the Nature and Design of that Covenant that God-Almighty made with the Jews, and how was it that they understood it? was there any thing commanded that might properly be called Sacraments? and likewise, what were their constant and usual Times of Worship?

Ans. The Terms of that National Covenant that God made with the Jews consisted of these three sorts of Precepts, Moral, Ecclesiastical and Political; which the Jews will have understood by those three words so often mentioned by Moses; Laws, Statutes and Judgments. By *Laws* they understood the Moral Law, the Notices of Good and Evil naturally implanted in Mens minds. By *Statutes* Ceremonial Precepts instituted by God, with peculiar reference to his Church: And by *Judgments* political Laws concerning Justice and Equity, the order of humane Societies, and the prudent and peaceable Management of the Common-wealth.

The Sacraments of the Jews were two, Circumcision and the Paschal Supper. Circumcision was the foederal right annexed by God as a Seal to the Covenant which he made with Abraham and his Posterity, and according renewed and taken into the Mosaical Constitutions, in the Room of which Baptism succeeds in the Christian Church. The Passover (which was eating the Paschal Lamb) was instituted by a yearly Memorial of their Deliverance from Egyptian Slavery; and as a Typical representation of our Redemption by Christ from the Bondage of Sin, and Hell that follows it. The door posts of the House were to be sprinkled with the Blood of the Lamb, to show our security from divine vengeance, by the blood of sprinkling. The Lamb was to be roasted and eaten whole, to prefigure the great sufferings of our Blessed Saviour; who was to pass thro' the fire of divine wrath, and be wholly embraced by us in all his Offices of King, Priest, and Prophet. None but those that were clean cou'd eat, to shew that Holy Men only can be made partakers of the Merits and Death of Christ; to be eaten standing with a staff in their hands, to put them in mind what hast they made out of the House of Bondage; and what present diligence we shou'd use to get free from the power of Sin and Satan. To be eaten with bitter herbs, as a Memorial of the bitter service they underwent in Egypt, and as a Type of that repentance and bearing the Crois (duties difficult and unpleasant) which all true Christians must undergo. Lastly, to be eaten with unleavened bread (their Houses being then perfectly purged from Leaven) to represent what infinite care we shou'd take to cleanse and purifie our hearts, that since Christ our passover is sacrificed for us therefore we shou'd keep the Feast (the Commemoration of his Death) Not with the old Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and Truth.

The stated times of their Worship were either daily, weekly, monthly or yearly. Daily, the time of Evening and Morning Sacrifice; Weekly, the Sabbath to be kept with Care and Strickness. Their Monthly Festivals, New Moons, to be performed with great expressions of Joy and Triumph for the Mercies of the Month

Month past. Their Annual ordinary, or extraordinary; ordinary those that returned every year. As first, the *Passover* to be kept on the fourteenth day of the first Month, in Memory of their Deliverance from *Egypt*. Secondly, *Pentecost*, called also the *Feast of Weeks*, because just seven weeks, or fifty days after the *Passover*: Instituted partly in Memory of the Law given on Mount *Sinai*, and partly as a *Thanksgiving* for the in-gathering of their *Harvest* about that time. Thirdly, the *Feast of Tabernacles*, kept the fifteenth day of the seventh Month, for seven days together; as a *Memento* of the Time that they dwell in *Tabernacles* in the *Wildernes*. At these three great Solemnities all the *Misericordies* were obliged to present themselves and Offerings at *Jerusalem*, as a Testimony of their Homage and Devotion to *God*. Besides which they had of Lesser Moment, the *Feast of Trumpets* and that of *Expiation*. Those extraordinary were such as recurred once in several years; such as the *Sabbatical year*, wherein the Land was to lie fallow, which was every seventh year: The great *Sabbatical year* of all was that of *Fubilee*, which returned at the end of seven ordinary *Sabbatick years*, that is every fiftieth year; the approach of which was proclaimed with *Trumpets*.

Quest. 3. About four Years since I was courted by T. G. to whom I engaged my self, and he himself to me, by mutual Promises, never to Marry any but one another during Life; and by breaking a piece of Gold. Not long after his Business (he being a Seaman) calling him to Sea, N. T. of the same Profession made Love to me, and would not be denied: I told him I was engaged to another; then at his desire I granted him the Reversion of my Favour after the others Death. After all this, I was Courted by I. S. (a Seaman also) who gained so far upon my Affection as (notwithstanding the two other Engagements) to extort a third from me; with him I broke a Six-pence, and positively engaged to Marry him, without taking any notice of my former Engagements, which I then resolved to break. T. G. is Dead, and N. G. now claims my Promise, and will not dispence with the Engagement. I have no mind to Marry him (tho' he is more deserving both in Person and Estate than I. S. because I love I. S. much better. This is real Truth, and I want speedy advice about it. Therefore pray Gentlemen be as quick as you can to tell a troubled Virgin, what she shall do in this Case, and whether I may not Marry I. S. as well as N. T. he having a Promise without notice of the other, or whether neither, and you will extreamly oblige?

Answ. Reversion of Favours is such an uncertain sort of an Inheritance, that the hopes of it cou'd satisfy none but a Mad man, or stark Lover, which is much at one; and therefore since N. T. has given you such an assurance of his suffering Patience and Love, we think you ought in Gratitude to give him all the Occasions you can of repenting of his folly, which you can never better do than by marrying him, such an unconstant Woman being very probable to make any man unhappy. But you are further obliged in Conscience, to keep your first Engagement, having no power afterwards to enter into any new Obligations of that Nature, prudence not suffering even such conditional ones, because they are oftentimes the Occasion of much Mis-

chief; yet after they have been once made they are obligatory, if whatsoever impeded their performance before ceases; as in the Case of N. T. to whom you made a promise of Marriage after the Death of T. G. and he being now dead, you are obliged to make it good.

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